## REMARKS

Claims 1 and 5-10 have been objected to for informalities. More specifically, in Claim 1, the Examiner requests that the phrase "repeated manner e" be changed to "repeated manner." Applicant has cancelled Claim 1, without prejudice, thereby rendering moot the objection to Claim 1 and its associated dependent Claims 5-6.

Claims 8-10 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which Applicant regards as the invention. Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection.

Applicant has amended Claim 8 to remove the reference to a concave side edge, as suggested by the Examiner. Accordingly, withdrawal of this §112 rejection is respectfully requested.

Claims 1 and 5-10 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over German Patent No. DE 4239475 (hereinafter DE '475) in view of Japanese Publication No. 2002-059711 to Iwamura (hereinafter JP '711) and further in view of Japanese Publication No. 03-074208 to Akiyama et al. (hereinafter JP '208). Applicant has cancelled Claim 1 and has amended dependent Claims 5-10 to refer to independent Claim 11, thereby rendering this rejection moot.

Claims 11-14 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over DE '475 in view of JP '711 and JP '208, and further in view of Japanese Publication No. 07-164829 to Shirai et al. (hereinafter JP '829). Claims 11, 13 and 14 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over DE '475 in view of JP '711 and further in view of

JP '829 and/or U.S. Patent No. 5,996,661 to Gerresheim et al. Applicant has cancelled Claims 13 and 14, without prejudice, thereby rendering these rejections moot with respect to these claims. However, with respect to Claims 11and 12, Applicant respectfully traverses these rejections.

Applicant respectfully submits that the cited references fail to disclose or suggest all of the claimed features of the present invention. More specifically, Applicant respectfully submits that the cited references fail to disclose or suggest that the first set of inclined grooves (such as grooves 5b of Applicant's Figure 1) have inner and outer edge portions defined as follows "wherein inner edge portions of said first set of inclined groves are connected to the arcuate curved main groove and outer edge portions are located within the tread shoulder region without extending to an outer edge of the tread shoulder region." In other words, Claim 11 recites that the first set of grooves (such as grooves 5b) terminate before reaching the outer edge of the tread shoulder region (such as region Ts).

On page 7 of the Office Action, the Examiner implicitly acknowledges that DE '475 fails to disclose this feature, and accordingly the Examiner relies upon JP '829 and/or the Gerresheim et al. reference for this feature. However, Applicant respectfully submits that that DE '475 teaches away from such a configuration where DE '475 specifically discloses in paragraphs [0029] and [0041] and in Claim 1 that grooves 3 and 4 should reach the edge of bearing surface 5, which is where water evacuation is throttled most strongly (paragraph [003]).

Additionally, Applicant also respectfully submits that JP '829 and Gerresheim et al. do not overcome this teaching away of DE '475. Specifically, the English Abstract of JP '829 discloses reducing the "number of pitches," but it does not disclose that the subgrooves should not extend to the outer edges of the tread shoulder region. Further, Figure 1 of JP '829 shows that subgrooves 2 and 3 extend to "grounded end (e)," which appears to be the edge of the contact patch. With regard to the Gerresheim et al. reference, this reference also fails to teach that the subgrooves should not extend to the outer edges of the tread shoulder region because, as disclosed in column 2 (lines 47-55), grooves 8 extend past tire contact patch 8 (Figure 1), i.e., beyond tread width TW (Figure 2), so that water can drain out of the grooves. Accordingly, these references do not teach this missing claimed feature either, nor do they overcome the teaching away of DE '475. Thus, for at least these reasons, Applicant respectfully requests the withdrawal of this §103 rejection of independent Claim 11 and associated dependent Claim 12.

Applicant also respectfully requests the withdrawal of this §103 rejection of Claims 11 and 12 because the cited references fail to disclose or suggest the claimed first and second sets of inclined grooves, where grooves from the first set alternate with those from the second set, and further wherein grooves of the first set (such as grooves 5b of Applicant's Figure 1) do not extend to the outer edge of the tread shoulder region and grooves of the second set (such as grooves 5a of Applicant's Figure 1) extend from the outer edge of the tread shoulder region but terminate prior to reaching the arcuate main grooves (such as arcuate main grooves 3 of Applicant's Figure 1), as recited in independent Claim 11.

In the configuration defined in Claim 11, which includes two sets of inclined grooves (such as set 5a and set 5b), the shoulder edge portions of one of these two sets of grooves (such as 5b) is located within the region of the tread shoulders, and the auxiliary grooves extending in the tire circumferential direction (such as grooves 4) have relatively limited groove width, so that each block formed in the shoulder region has a relatively large size. Thus, each block can exhibit a relatively high rigidity, which results in allowing the tire to exhibit a high operational stability.

In contrast, in the tires disclosed in DE '475, JP' 711, JP '208, JP '829 and the Gerresheim et al. reference, the grooves that could possibly be considered as corresponding to the claimed inclined grooves are not configured in the claimed alternating two set configuration. Instead, in DE '475, JP' 711, JP '208, JP '829, and Gerresheim et al., all of the grooves that could be considered as corresponding to the claimed inclined grooves provided in the shoulder region are in communication with both an arcuate curved main groove (or other main groove) and a shoulder edge portion. Thus, these grooves do not satisfy the claimed two set configuration in which the grooves of a particular set are in communication with either an arcuate curved main groove (the first set) or a shoulder edge portion (the second set). Therefore, in the tires in these cited references, the shoulder blocks are relatively small in size. Accordingly, the rigidity of such blocks is relatively limited, and the high operational stability achieved by the configuration defined in Claim 11 cannot be obtained.

Thus, for this reason also, Applicant respectfully requests the withdrawal of the §103 rejections of independent Claim 11 and associated dependent Claim 12.

For all of the above reasons, Applicant requests reconsideration and allowance of the claimed invention. Should the Examiner be of the opinion that a telephone conference would aid in the prosecution of the application, or that outstanding issues exist, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned.

Respectfully submitted,

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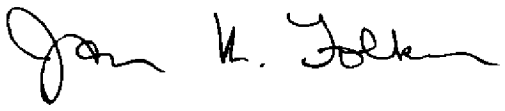
By 

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June 20, 2008

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